

To advance psychology as a science, a profession, and a means for promoting human welfare in Alaska



## From the President

Dear Membership,

I am excited to announce a highly anticipated continuing education event that will be held as part of our Annual Meeting this coming fall. Dr. Tom Horvath, an internally recognized expert in Addictions will be coming from San Diego to train us in evidence based principles for addictions treatment. His training will address how the office-based psychotherapist can assess, diagnose, and treat clients presenting with co-occurring addictive behaviors. He will address evolutionary aspects of problematic addictive behavior, establishing rapport around addiction issues, identifying and maintaining motivations to change, teaching how to cope with craving, identifying and treating other common problems that arise in addiction cases, and knowing when to refer for specialty treatment. Save the date: Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015!

Additionally, I am delighted to inform our membership that AK-PA was awarded another hearty Organizational Development Grant from the APA's Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice (CAPP) for 2015. CAPP recognizes the need very small state associations have for assistance in maintaining its operations, including lobbying. This grant is awarded in the spirit of resource sharing to support projects aimed at promoting the practice of psychology, and AK-PA's leadership is grateful to work in partnership with CAPP and the Practice Directorate as we confront the challenge of assuring the availability of psychological services in the changing health care delivery system.

Along these lines, AK-PA's delegation to the APA's Annual State Leadership Conference (SLC) has returned from Washington DC where we lobbied Congress regarding these very issues. In this newsletter edition, we include several reports of these efforts. SLC combines programming relating to federal advocacy, state association management issues, practice trends and networking with leaders from all state, provincial and territorial psychological associations (SPTA's).

I am honored to have served on the AK-PA Board for over 6 years now and see our organization growing stronger and richer in what it can offer our members. The Board is now comprised of a wide range of clinicians, from graduate students and newly minted PhD's, to individuals who were among the founders of AK-PA and have a wealth of history and wisdom. We have private practitioners and individuals working in non-profit, medical, and university settings. We represent a wide range of views, but we have a common bond – we believe service work is a value and that advocacy from our professional organization strengthens our profession.

Wishing all a lovely summer, with sunny days~

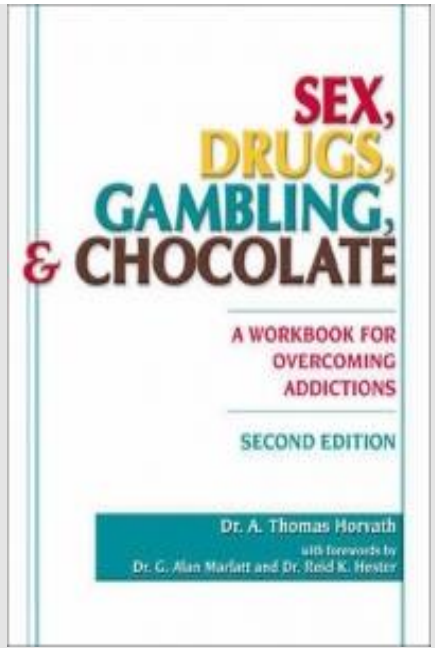
*Jennifer Beathe, PsyD*  
President

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[From left, Tonie Protzman, ED; Robert Lane, Federal Advocacy; Jennifer Beathe; Michael Covone, Public Education; Ruddy Taylor, Diversity Chair]



## SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL MEETING!

Friday, October 30th, 2015  
Anchorage, UAA Consortium Library

**Day-long Training in Evidence Based Treatment for Addictions**  
*Principles of Addiction Treatment for Every Psychotherapist*  
Tom Horvath, PhD, ABPP

*Dr. Tom Horvath, founder of Practical Recovery, is an internationally recognized expert on addiction treatment. He has been president of SMART Recovery for 18 of its 20 years. With over 1300 meetings worldwide, SMART Recovery is the largest of the non-12-step mutual help groups. He is a past president of the Society of Addiction Psychology (Division 50 of the American Psychological Association), the world's largest organization of addiction psychologists. He is the author of Sex, Drugs, Gambling & Chocolate: A Workbook for Overcoming Addictions (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).*



## 2015 AK-PA EVENTS

- August 10, 2015~ 7 PM Board Meeting
- September 9, 2015~ 7 PM Board Meeting
- October 30th, 2015 ~ Annual Meeting -- Tom Horvath, PhD; UAA, Time TBD
- December 14, 2015 ~ 7 PM Board Meeting

\*Denali Towers, 16th Floor Conference Room  
2550 Denali Street, Anchorage, 16th Floor  
All members and prospective members welcome!

# Join Us!

UAA  
July 31<sup>st</sup>

## 5th Friday Event

Jennifer Burkhart, MS

### Chinese Medicine as a Somatic Psychology

Presented by Michael Aanavi, PhD, LAc  
Friday, July 31, 2015 || 6.00 - 7.30pm

During this 5th Friday talk, Dr. Aanavi will discuss the psychological perspective embedded in the somatic and energetic tradition of Chinese medicine. This will include a discussion of the ways in which he uses this perspective in clinical practice to inform the treatment of trauma, including intergenerational trauma. This talk will be primarily discussion-based and light refreshments will be provided!

Location: UAA Social Sciences Building, room 302 & UAF Gruening Building, room 209 (event will be video-conferenced between UAA and UAF) - parking is FREE!

Presenter Bio: Michael Aanavi, PhD, LAc is a clinical psychologist and a licensed acupuncturist in private practice in Anchorage ([www.michaelaanavi.com](http://www.michaelaanavi.com)). He received his clinical training in psychology at the Native American Health Center (Oakland) under Dr. Eduardo Duran, as well as at the National Asian American Psychology Training Center (San Francisco).

In addition to his graduate education in Chinese medicine, Dr. Aanavi served as an apprentice under Dr. Joseph Chi Ng (San Francisco), and has trained for over 25 years in taijiquan, qigong, and other energetic and contemplative disciplines under Dr. Benjamin R. Tong, Dr. Randy Sugawara, Sat Chuen Hon, and Liu Ming. Dr. Aanavi has served on the faculty of UCSF School of Medicine, California School of Professional Psychology, and The Psychotherapy Institute (Berkeley), and is the author of *The Trusting Heart: Addiction, Recovery, and Intergenerational Trauma* (Chiron, 2012).



## Welcome our new APAGS Rep!

The Alaska Psychological Association would like to give a warm welcome to our new APAGS Representative, Jennifer Burkhart. Ms. Burkhart is a doctoral student in the University of Alaska Joint PhD Program in Clinical and Community Psychology. Jennifer will represent doctoral students on the AK-PA Board of Directors. Welcome, Jennifer!

## ELECTIONS!

The following individuals are running for the upcoming election. Ballots will be emailed to full AK-PA members June 16th, 2015. Ballots will be open for 30 days. Election results will be published July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

## President Elect

Jana Zeedyk, PhD  
Licensed Psychologist, Alaska and Oregon



Two years have quickly passed since you elected me to serve as member at large on the AKPA Board. While I came to the AKPA Board with experience as an Ethics committee member for the Oregon Psychological Association and as the Chair of the Oregon Board of Psychologist Examiners, there has nonetheless been a considerable amount to learn about the particular challenges of practicing in our state. There has also been much to consider regarding how to meet those challenges effectively.

During my tenure on the AKPA Board I have had the opportunity to more fully connect with fellow licensees as well as members of the larger mental health community. These two years have impressed upon me the caliber of our professional community and fueled my interest in continuing to tend to matters which support our practice life to the greatest extent possible. In particular, I would like to enhance communication between the Board of Psychologist Examiners and AKPA, as well as develop resources for responding to practice concerns in our professional community. That being so, I am asking you to vote in support of my serving as President Elect for the AKPA Board. Thank you for your consideration.

## Treasurer

Sarah Dewane, PhD  
Licensed Psychologist, Alaska



Over the last 20 years, I have had the opportunity to receive my education and training in Alaska, allowing me to serve the state as a Licensed Psychologist. Through programs at the University of Alaska, I earned my MS in Clinical Psychology in 1998 and my PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology with a Rural, Indigenous Emphasis in 2010. Currently, I am the Director of Behavioral Science, overseeing the integrated behavioral health program at the Providence Alaska Family Medicine Residency and Center in Anchorage and I serve as the Co-Director of Training for the APA accredited Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium. I have over 17 years of clinical experience working with adults, children, adolescents, and families in outpatient, residential, and medical settings. I have developed a specialty in health behavior change and integrated behavioral health care in primary care. In combination with my clinical experience, I also served for 9 years as a project manager and research professor at the University of Alaska, Anchorage focusing on mental health and substance abuse research implementation, program evaluation, and behavioral health training. In 2012, I completed the Behavioral Science and Family Systems Educator Fellowship, administered by the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine. Through these professional experiences, I have developed a strong desire to serve medically underserved populations in Alaska and to advocate for the profession of psychology at a local and national level. My professional memberships include the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers, American Psychological Association (Health Psychology Division), Society of Teachers of Family Medicine, and National Association of Rural Mental Health. Over the last three years, I have provided support to the Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA) through my service as the Early Career Psychologist and Member-at-Large. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve AK-PA in the role as Treasurer. Thank you for your consideration in the upcoming election for the open position of AK-PA Treasurer.



## Member at Large

### Michael Aanavi, PhD, LAc

Dr. Michael Aanavi is a clinical psychologist and a licensed acupuncturist in private practice in Anchorage ([www.michaelaanavi.com](http://www.michaelaanavi.com)), and is the author of *The Trusting Heart: Addiction, Recovery, and Intergenerational Trauma*. He was raised in rural Hawaii, and spent a decade in New York and New England and two decades in the Bay Area before finding his home in Alaska.

Dr. Aanavi earned his bachelor's degree with emphasis in film and music at Sarah Lawrence College in 1988, began working in the addiction treatment field in 1990 as a counselor for the Phoenix House Foundation, and subsequently completed a PhD in clinical/multicultural and community psychology (1997) and an M.S. in traditional Chinese medicine (2007).

He received his clinical training in psychology at the Native American Health Center and at the National Asian American Psychology Training Center, and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Kaiser Permanente Department of Addiction Medicine (San Francisco). Dr. Aanavi has served as clinician, consultant, and director for numerous mental health, addiction treatment, and primary care programs, and his articles and essays have appeared in a variety of publications.

Dr. Aanavi is a member of the National Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology, and holds the American Psychological Association Certificate of Proficiency in the Treatment of Substance Use Disorders. He has served on the faculty of UCSF School of Medicine, California School of Professional Psychology, and The Psychotherapy Institute.



### Lynne Kelsey, LPC

Lynne received MA degree from Catholic University of Washington DC in 1990. She had been counseling young women and youth since 1981. Prior to that she was a childcare provider, eventually becoming an infant to toddler child development, early literacy, addiction and preventive healthcare specialist, parenting educator and pre-school to college teacher. She studied clinical psychology, especially assessment, with regard to brain behavior relationships at the doctoral level. She went on to work with autism, disabilities, trauma, animal assisted therapy, play therapy, art therapy, addiction treatment and rehabilitation. She has a background in childbirth and doula work informed by studies in infant mental health and breath work therapy. She treats children and their families in rural and urban AK for trauma, grief, depression, anxiety and other conditions. She is a certified paralegal and experienced in child custody investigation. She is trained in several Cognitive Behavioral Techniques including DBT and EMDR, the Red Cross for Natural Disaster Relief response, telemedicine and provides mental coaching to athletes. She is a member of: American Psychology Association, American Counseling Association, The National Association of Social Workers, National Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, World Infant Mental Health, Institute of Perinatal Prenatal Psychology, AK Association of Attachment Bonding among others. Kelsey provides contractual service for DOD (ptsd, tbi, kids and families on base), DOE (early education/literacy/health prevention, infant mental health/attachment bonding), parenting, literacy)and DOJ (grant review) for social, justice, mental health and educational causes.



### Jennifer Burkhart, MS

Jennifer Burkhart is a (nearly) lifelong Alaskan, and plans to remain in state to serve the needs of rural and urban Alaskan communities indefinitely. She earned her BA in Psychology and MS in Clinical Psychology from UAA, and is currently a doctoral candidate in the Joint UAA-UAF PhD Program in Clinical-Community Psychology with a rural, indigenous emphasis. Throughout her time in the PhD program, she has served in several leadership roles, including two years as Student Representative for the UAA campus. Jennifer will be completing her doctoral internship this year at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, a member of the Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium. Her practice and research interests include program development and evaluation, self-care, wellness, the integration of clinical and community psychology perspectives, Integral psychotherapy, resilience, clinical supervision, and indigenous ways of knowing and healing. Her doctoral dissertation will be an expanded version of a pilot study she completed as a doctoral student, a mixed-methods examination of the impacts of a particular model of self-care (Integral Life Practice) on graduate students' stress and wellbeing. Over the past nine months, Jennifer has served as a volunteer for AK-PA's Continuing Education committee, for which she developed and continues to manage the online training event evaluation and CE certificate delivery system. She looks forward to the opportunity to continue serving the AK-PA community as a member of the Board.

# APA Public and Member Communications

April 30, 2015

## Statement from APA in response to April 30, 2015 New York Times article

Members have contacted the APA Central Office expressing concerns about this morning's New York Times article which recirculated allegations about APA support for the CIA's torture program. We understand those concerns. APA senior governance and staff take the allegations of support for torture and the public misunderstanding they have created very seriously.

When James Risen first made his allegations last October we released a statement refuting them (<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2014/11/risen-allegations.aspx>). However, due to the seriousness of the allegations we believed that they required an independent and definitive review. As you know, outside attorney David Hoffman of the law firm Sidley Austin was asked to conduct such a review. Mr. Hoffman has broad experience in conducting independent reviews and an unchallenged reputation for independence and integrity. His work on the review is ongoing.

Mr. Hoffman's review is fully independent and it is important that it be perceived as such by the public. Toward that end, and while the review is on-going, APA is not making any comment on the merit of the allegations. Mr. Hoffman has full and unfettered access to the people and documents he deems necessary for the review – to the extent APA can control such access. His report will determine the facts. While we are hopeful that the report will clear APA's name (especially since the allegations are so antithetical to psychology's mission and APA's actual work) we believe that it is important that Mr. Hoffman be given as much time as he needs to do a thorough review. Regardless of the outcome, we believe the independent review is critical to the Association being able to move forward.

We tentatively expect the review to be completed later this spring or early this summer but the final completion schedule will be determined by Mr. Hoffman. Once it is completed and the report received and reviewed by the APA Board of Directors (with input from the APA Council of Representatives) it will be made public, in its entirety, along with any initial responsive actions that APA determines are needed. The Council will also have a second opportunity to review the report and take additional actions during its August meeting.

When the report is released, we will undertake a proactive communications program to inform members and the general public of the report findings. That outreach will include contact with national and international media, social media outreach and a same-day communications to all APA members. In terms of what APA has done today, we have shared a response statement with media and have also posted a response to Facebook and Twitter. More information is also available on the APA website. If you are interested in a full chronology of APA's action and policies concerning national security interrogations see: <http://www.apa.org/news/press/statements/interrogations.aspx>

## Advocacy in Washington DC and Juneau

**Robert Lane, PhD**  
**AK-PA Federal Advocacy Coordinator**

When I first started doing advocacy work for AK-PA I did not understand how long some things take to accomplish. For instance it took a decade to pass mental health parity and almost another decade to get it implemented under the Affordable Care Act. This SLC, I found that our main issues had all been on the lobbying agenda before and in the case of repealing Medicare's Sustainable Growth Rate requirements for about 10 years (though the act itself dated to 1994). You may recall the SGR was intended to contain the explosive cost federal healthcare in the 1990s but the formula led to such drastic cuts in reimbursement, that each year Congress passed what it called it's "Doc Fix" that put the cuts off another year. We were told there was strong bi-partisan support for repeal and negotiations were proceeding, so we went up on Capital Hill at little more hopeful in regard to the SGR than we had in the past. Two of our other three issues were also related to Medicare; increasing Medicare reimbursement rates and adding psychologist to the definition of physician for Medicare purposes. Our fourth issue was adding psychologist to those eligible for incentives to move to electronic healthcare records.

Previous to last year, Senator Murkowski always met with us, but the last two years we have only met with a staffer. The year we met with Garrett Bole. Our issues were not well received by Mr. Boyle; he said the Senator's

bottom line was cost on all of our asks and while he was certainly polite, we got the message we were wasting our time. For the first time in a while we did not meet with Representative Don Young who was ill. Representative Young has voted in favor of our positions for the last seven or eight years and Paul Milliott indicated the Mr. Young's views have not changed. I then met with Alaska's new Senator, Dan Sullivan and spent time telling about each of our issues. While being distinctly non-committal, he spent 30 minutes going over everything and asking question - so in that sense it was an excellent initial meeting.

Back to my very first sentence - I am happy to report that after more than a decade of lobbying, in mid April, President Obama signed into law a repeal of the SGR. And just as gratifying, all three of Alaska's federal officials voted to repeal. It gets tiring to send off the same emails year after year. But if we can stick to it, we eventually get things done.

### ... And Advocacy in Juneau

This year I traveled to Juneau for an annual lobbying day. I had prepared materials identifying who psychologists are and what we do. I also took brochures on stress from the APA Help center. When the legislative day was conceived of the previous fall, we had no specific bills we were concerned about and needed to follow. However very early in the session, Senate Bill 41, requiring fingerprinting of psychologists potentially every two years, was filed and that became a central focus for AKPA's legislative day. The Association's lobbyist helped set up appointments with each member of the Senate Judiciary Committee where the fingerprinting bill was being heard. As I raised questions and some concerns, it became clear that several of the senators also had some concerns about the bill. AKPA members were encouraged to weigh in on the topic by sending emails to the Judiciary Committee.

Between the advocacy in Juneau and the emails the senators received, the chair of the Judiciary decided to hold SB 41. While being held, the author of the bill asked that it be held until better agreement could be reached between the Alaska Psychological Association on the Psychologist and Psychological Associate's licensing board. AKPA and the licensing board expect to work this summer to reach an accord under which both sides could be happy.

This was a wonderful example of the importance of having an advocacy committee and a lobbyist present in Juneau. By directly engaging the committee in Juneau and following up with emails from the Association's members, we were able to exert enough influence to greatly slow down this bill that had obviously been fast-tracked for passage. Thanks to all who wrote emails - as a group we clearly have more influence! AKPA will work with the licensing board over the summer.

## State Leadership 2015, Diversity Delegate Report

**Ruddy Taylor, PhD**  
**AK-PA Diversity Chair**

I was honored to be one of the 29 Diversity Delegates to attend State Leadership Conference (SLC). Alaska was awarded funding to support my attendance at this year's conference (The 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row Alaska has been awarded this competitive bid.) Having the title of returning delegate gave me the opportunity to mentor three first time diversity delegates, representing the following states Hawaii, Montana, and Oklahoma. As a mentor, my role was to help the mentee orientate to SLC, yet I also see it as another networking opportunity to share ideas state to state.

A continuing theme of the delegates was diversity continuing education credits as part of the required licensing renewal process. To date only a few states have included diversity training as part of the licensing renewal process, with Washington State being the most recent. A highlight at this year's SLC was the Diversity Delegates opportunity to facilitate a workshop allowing participants to earn three CEU's for diversity training.

The workshop titled: *Maneuvering Through A Leadership Path Strewn With Micro-And-Not-So-Microaggressions: Leaders in Psychology Share Their Experiences*. One outcomes of this workshop was a facilitation of difficult dialogue. In addition, there was a consensus among many participants one key to avoiding microaggressions is to better understand, respect the perspectives, and challenges faced by diverse groups.

I arrived in DC one day prior to SLC as I was selected to attend the expanded leadership development from Division 31 and the Office of Ethnic Minority Affairs (OEMA)/ Commission on Ethnic Minority Retention, Recruitment, and Training in Psychology (CEMRRAT). The training focused on three areas, Leadership, Negotiating, and Mentoring.

As your diversity delegate, a goal for this year is to celebrate the diversity among our membership. One way is to offer each of you an opportunity to submit an article for the newsletter that recognizes diversity. Please accept

this invitation to share your diverse backgrounds and/or experiences. Suggest article topics from the continuing education topic survey 2013 included but not limited to Alaska specific issues, developmental disabilities, sexual orientation, gender, women/men's issues, immigrant/refugee, religious diversity awareness, lifespan awareness.

Information about submitting an article can be found at the end of the newsletter.

**"If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity"**

— **John F. Kennedy, Commencement Address at American University, June 10 1963**

## State Leadership 2015, PEC Report

**Michael R. Covone, MPH, MSW, PhD Candidate**  
**AK-PA Public Education Coordinator**

As the newly appointed Public Education Campaign (PEC) Coordinator for the Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA), I had the great pleasure of attending the 2015 American Psychological Association (APA) State Leadership Conference in March. The conference was much larger than I had anticipated, and was organized in such a way to allow the different roles in state leadership to have their own forums for role-specific training, general continuing education, and opportunities for networking.

I attended an orientation for new PEC coordinators focused on articulating our roles in our state associations, and orienting new coordinators to APA's public education campaign materials and programs. This was an excellent opportunity to meet other new PEC coordinators from around the country, and interact with seasoned coordinators who were willing to share their experiences and insights serving their state associations in this role. Much of the training was focused on working with media to present psychological concepts to the general population, and the development of targeted education campaigns from our state associations.

I also attended a larger PEC coordinator training over several days that gathered all coordinators from around the country in attendance at SLC to participate in more in-depth media relations training. At this training we were presented with several scenarios that included real life examples of conundrums that a PEC coordinator may face in their duties and were asked to brainstorm solutions to these problems with other coordinators. We also attended detailed and interactive sessions on working with radio, online and social media, print media, and in the development and coordination of live educational events in our communities.

Toward the end of my time at SLC, I joined AK-PA members in visiting with two members of Alaska's congressional delegation to discuss issues important to Alaska's Psychologists and Psychology as a whole. This was a very exhilarating experience because it was clear that we were voicing the concerns of AK-PA membership to the very people that could vote to make important changes at the state and national levels. During these meetings, it was also clear that many other guilds and associations were also making such visits lobbying their members of Congress to resist the changes that we were requesting to be made. This realization made it very clear why it is important for psychologists to meet with their members of Congress to articulate the reasons why changes to state and national policies are important for the people we serve.

It was an honor and privilege to attend this conference, and I am working to put my newly gained skills to work as the PEC coordinator for AK-PA. I would like to welcome AK-PA members who might have an interest in assisting with public education campaigns to contact me at [mcovone@alaska.edu](mailto:mcovone@alaska.edu).

**2015 SLC Handouts and PowerPoint slides:** <http://www.apapracticecentral.org/advocacy/state/leadership/slc-handouts.aspx>



## In support of Medicaid Expansion and Reform: Advocacy Letter

April 13, 2015

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA), we are writing to express our support for Gov. Walker's proposed Medicaid Expansion and Reform Plan. While there remain important challenges and issues to be resolved, this legislation represents an important step forward in increasing access to healthcare, including behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse) services.

As psychologists practicing in Alaska, we are well aware of the significant economic and social burden of untreated mental health disorders and of people with chronic co-occurring medical and behavioral health disorders. The costs of treating individuals with co-occurring chronic medical and mental health or substance abuse disorders may be 2-3 times higher than in people without co-occurring conditions.

These co-occurring medical and mental disorders are not the exception, but rather the norm. There is strong evidence that medical disorders (such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease), may lead to mental health disorders (including depressive and anxiety disorders). In addition, mental health disorders place individuals at greater risk for medical disorders, and both may share common risk factors, or "common causes." We support comprehensive, integrated healthcare that provides access to behavioral health, as well as primary care.

Unfortunately, the existing Medicaid system has the negative effect of delaying needed medical care until the person qualifies for more intensive, often less effective, and more expensive services, such as emergency room or hospital level of care. With this expansion, Alaskans would be able to access the right care at the right time rather than having to wait until their condition becomes chronic.

Although we support this expansion, it must be noted we have reservations due to the significant challenges that exist within our healthcare system that inhibit the contributions of psychologists. To offer one example, psychologists are doctoral level providers, but are unable to independently bill Medicaid for psychotherapy.

With the proposed expansion, the number of additional people who will have access to behavioral health services will greatly surpass the capacity of our community mental health system. Therefore, psychologists need to become an integral part of expansion and reform efforts to structure a system that can meet this demand and increase access to needed psychological service providers. We would like the following considered in the expansion discussion: 1) that any possible future implementation of a provider tax is not applied to small providers, such as private practitioners and small group practices; 2) regulation revision to include that psychologists and psychological associates can bill for psychotherapy and; 3) rate review processes are put into place for behavioral health services that ensure providers can remain financially viable.

The profession of psychology, with its empirical research base and practical emphasis on helping people change the complex behaviors that contribute to both chronic medical and psychological disorders, is uniquely positioned to provide valuable services in a reformed and integrated healthcare system. We look forward to active participation in the design and implementation of such a system of care.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Beathe, PsyD  
President

Michael Sobocinski, PhD  
President-Elect



# AK-PA and APA Offers Tips to Manage Work-related Stress

## The Alaska Psychological Association and APA Offer Tips to Manage Work-related Stress

June is National Professional Wellness Month and the Alaska Psychological Association and the American Psychological Association offer tips to manage stress at work.

Everyone who has ever held a job has, at some point, felt the pressure of work-related stress. Any job can have stressful elements, even if people love what they do. In the short-term, people may experience pressure to meet a deadline or to fulfill a challenging obligation. But when work stress becomes chronic, it can be overwhelming — and harmful to both physical and emotional health.

Unfortunately such long-term stress is all too common. In 2014, 60 percent of Americans cited work as a top source of stress, according to the American Psychological Association's (APA) annual Stress in America Survey.

It's not always possible to avoid the tensions that occur on the job. Yet people can take steps to manage work-related stress.

**Track stressors.** Keep a journal for a week or two to identify which situations create the most stress. Record thoughts, feelings and information about the environment, including the people and circumstances involved, the physical setting and reactions. Taking notes can help people find patterns among stressors and reactions.

**Develop healthy responses.** Instead of attempting to fight stress with fast food or alcohol, try to make healthy choices when tensions rise. Exercise is a great stress-buster. Yoga can be an excellent choice, but any form of physical activity is beneficial. Also make time for hobbies and favorite activities. Whether it's reading a novel, going to concerts or playing games with the family, make sure to set aside time for pleasurable activities. Getting enough good-quality sleep is also important for effective stress management. Build healthy sleep habits by limiting caffeine intake late in the day and minimizing stimulating activities, such as computer and television use right before bed.

**Take time to recharge.** To avoid the negative effects of chronic stress and burnout, people need time to replenish and return to pre-stress levels of functioning. This recovery process requires "switching off" from work by having periods of time when people are neither engaging in work-related activities, nor thinking about work. That's why it's critical to disconnect from time to time and not let vacation days go to waste. When possible, people should take time off to relax and unwind, so they can come back to work feeling reinvigorated and ready to do their best.

**Talk to management.** Healthy employees are typically more productive, so bosses have an incentive to create a work environment that promotes employee well-being. Employees should start by having an open conversation with their supervisor. The purpose of this isn't to lay out a list of complaints, but rather to come up with an effective plan for managing the work stressors, so employees can perform at their best on the job. While some parts of the plan may be designed to help employees improve skills in areas such as time management, other elements might include identifying employer-sponsored wellness resources, such as clarifying expectations, getting necessary resources or support from colleagues, enriching the job to include more challenging or meaningful tasks, or making changes to the physical workspace to reduce strain.

**Seek support.** Accepting help from trusted friends and family members can improve the ability to manage stress. Employers may also have stress management resources available through an employee assistance program (EAP), including online information, available counseling and referral to mental health professionals, if needed. If you continue to feel overwhelmed by work stress, you may want to talk to a psychologist. Psychologists are trained to help people better manage stress and change unhealthy behaviors.

*The Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA) is Alaska's State, Provincial & Territorial Psychological Association (STPA) under the American Psychological Association. It is AK-PA's role to provide professional leadership in the field of Psychology in Alaska. We take seriously our responsibility to mentor emerging professionals in Alaska, contribute to psychological education, and to encourage a climate of collegiality and professional cohesion among Psychologist and the larger mental health community in Alaska. To learn more AK-PA and the benefits of membership visit: <http://www.ak-pa.org/membership/index.asp>.*

*The American Psychological Association, in Washington, D.C., is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. APA's membership includes more than 130,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance the creation, communication and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.*

## Resource Sharing

### The New World of Apps

Practitioners need to be prepared for the growing impact on practice.



***Step Away.*** Patrick Dulin, PhD, a psychologist at the University of Alaska's Department of Psychology, has led an NIAAA (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism) grant-funded team in producing the app, *Step Away*. Much like a personal coach or sponsor, the app helps clients gain insight into their alcohol problem and teaches them skills they can use to manage problems, such as alcohol cravings, anxiety and moving away from a drinking lifestyle. It also helps remind them of their goals and their reasons to make a change, particularly during high risk times that can lead them back to drinking. The app maps a user's drinking patterns, triggers, and mood with daily interviews and weekly feedback sessions. The app even lets users add their own support contacts and non-alcohol related activities to support the user's goal, which can be either safe drinking or abstinence.

See: <http://stepaway.biz/>

***VA National Center for PTSD.*** The Department of Veteran's Affairs has developed treatment companion apps that may be useful, such as:

- ***PTSD Coach:*** This app provides the consumer with resources meant to be used together with professional treatment. These resources include information on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and treatments, tools for the patient to track symptoms, tools to help consumers handle stress symptoms, and links to support. This app and its resources are a supplement to treatment.
- ***CPT Coach:*** This mobile app serves as a companion to CPT therapy and is meant to assist the consumer and provider as they work through the CPT treatment manual. Neither CPT, nor this application, is a self-help tool. CPT Coach is geared toward patients with PTSD and includes features such as the ability to track symptoms of PTSD, tools to keep track of tasks assigned by a psychologist between sessions, homework assignments and worksheets that can be completed between sessions and a reminder system for appointments.
- ***ACT Coach:*** A treatment companion app for use while in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). ACT aims to help you live with unpleasant thoughts and feelings without avoiding them or being controlled by them.
- ***CBT-i Coach:*** A mobile app to be used during Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-i) between a mental health professional and patient. CBT-i Coach is a supplement to enhance treatment and help patients adjust and maintain sleep routines and their approach to sleep.
- ***Stay Quit Coach:*** A mobile app designed to assist smoking cessation. Although proposed as a relapse prevention tool, it can be used as a standalone intervention. Stay Quit Coach allows users to manage self-care and relapse through education, resources, and support.

See: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/materials/apps/index.asp>

***National Center for Telehealth and Technology (T2).*** T2 is closely aligned with the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (DCoE) and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. The Center specializes in applications for military, veterans and their families; however, many of the apps listed here could be utilized with your own patients, or yourself, such as:

- ***T2 Mood Tracker,*** available through both Apple and Android, includes a full range of mood scales. Consumers can rate their moods and the results will show in graph form. They can also generate a report allowing them to share the results with you.
- ***Provider Resilience,*** this app gives health care providers tools to guard against burnout and compassion fatigue as they help service members, veterans, and their families. Your responses to a short self-assessment create ratings of your risk for compassion fatigue, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress.

See: [t2health.dcoe.mil/products/mobile-apps](http://t2health.dcoe.mil/products/mobile-apps)

## AK-PA Submissions and Advertising

**Tonie Marie Quaintance Protzman, MS, Executive Director**

The AK-PA newsletter is published quarterly. This publication is intended to keep mental health professionals informed about practice issues. Contributions and letters are invited. The editor reserves the right to edit articles and submissions for clarity and/or length. AK-PA is not responsible for opinion or facts in bylined articles.

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## About Our Organization

The Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1963 as a professional organization representing the interests of psychology professionals throughout the state. The purpose of the Association is: to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting human health and welfare; to work with state, community, civic, educational, and religious groups in promoting human health and welfare; to foster and maintain high standards of practice in the field of psychology; to make available to the public information regarding psychology as a science and a profession; and to represent the scientific and professional interests of psychologists in Alaska to APA.

**We're on the Web!**

*See us at:*

<http://www.ak-pa.org/>

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To advance psychology as a science, a profession, and a means for promoting human welfare in Alaska